



C A M D E N
S Y M P H O N Y
O R C H E S T R A

Summer Concert



Conductor: Levon Parikian

Leader: John Crawford

Soloist: Clara Rodriguez

Saturday 24th June 2023 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Tickets: £15 / £12 concessions including programme.

Camden Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1081563.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Welcome to the final concert of our 2022-2023 season, featuring a programme of American music that is the perfect accompaniment to a summer evening. The concert opens with Aaron Copland's suite from the 1940 film *Our Town*. Acclaimed pianist Clara Rodriguez joins us to perform George Gershwin's *Piano Concerto*, a piece which fuses the traditional classical concerto form with a modern jazz-inspired style. Florence Price's first symphony was the first symphony by a black woman to be performed by a major American orchestra and is infused with melodies and rhythms from African American folk music.

Camden Symphony Orchestra has been a mainstay of musical life in north London for more than forty years with around seventy regular players. Under our Musical Director Levon Parikian we seek to combine the familiar staples of the classical and romantic repertoire with less well-known and more challenging works. CSO rehearses on a weekly basis and performs three major orchestral concerts a year.

Recent highlights have included Brahms' *Symphony No. 4*, Holst's *The Planets*, Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, Sibelius' *Finlandia* and Vaughan Williams' *A London Symphony*. Our world premiere performance of *Dream Big for Tomorrow*, a work for improvising vocalist and orchestra, was recently broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Recent concerto performances include Elgar's *Cello Concerto*, Strauss' *Horn Concerto No. 1* and Brahms' *Double Concerto for Violin and Cello*. The orchestra has performed many choral works including Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Elgar's *The Spirit of England* and Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.

Whilst we pride ourselves on our friendly, inclusive environment, we take our music-making seriously. We are always pleased to hear from musicians interested in joining us. For more information about the orchestra, please visit www.camdenso.org.uk.



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C A M D E N
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O R C H E S T R A

Aaron Copland
Our Town

George Gershwin
Piano Concerto
Soloist: Clara Rodriguez

~ Interval ~

Please join us for refreshments which will be served at the back of the church.

Florence Price
Symphony No. 1

Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, digital watch alarms and other electronic devices are switched off during the performance.

We would like to thank the Clergy, Parish Administrator and PCC of St Cyprian's Church for permission to perform here tonight, and for their assistance in organising this concert.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990) - *Our Town* (1940)

Aaron Copland was an American composer, teacher, writer, and conductor who was often referred to by his peers and critics as the 'Dean of American Composers'. The open, slowly changing harmonies in his music exemplify the sound of American music, evoking the vast American landscape and pioneer spirit. He is best known for his ballets *Appalachian Spring*, *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo*, his orchestral work *El Salón México* and his *Fanfare for the Common Man* written for brass and percussion. These were written in the 1930s and 1940s in a deliberately accessible style, but he also produced music in other genres, including symphonies, chamber music, vocal works, operas and film scores.

In 1940 Copland wrote the music for Sol Lesser's film *Our Town*. The movie, with a script by Thornton Wilder, was based on Wilder's 1938 Pulitzer Prize-winning play about life in the small town of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire. Copland explained, 'For the film version, they were counting on the music to translate the transcendental aspects of the story. I tried for clean and clear sounds and in general used straight-forward harmonies and rhythms that would project the serenity and sense of security of the story'. After the film's release Copland arranged a suite from the score, using the title music, some of the sections illustrating the life in the town and the final graveside scene. In 1944 he made a revised arrangement, dedicated to Leonard Bernstein, and this is the version we're performing tonight.

Our Town is a nostalgic description of daily life in a small New Hampshire town around the turn of the 20th century. The play's sentimentality is enhanced by viewing the town through the eyes of Emily, a young woman dying following complications in childbirth who is permitted to revisit her past for a single typical day. Copland was familiar with New England

simplicity from his stays at the MacDowell Artists' Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. He evoked the town with the use of simple and serene New England Congregationalist hymns. Due to the film's gentle nature, most of the music had to be moderate in tempo, and Copland wrote to a friend, 'I'd give my shirt for one decent allegro'. He nevertheless succeeded in creating subtle variety in the score.

The subject appealed to Copland, who enjoyed the challenge of writing music whose artistic standard was high but would reach a wide audience. He observed that, 'the composer is in a special position to appreciate what music does to a film because he sees it first without any music. Movie audiences may not consciously realise they are listening to music when they view a film, but it works in their emotions nonetheless'. The score for *Our Town* received an Oscar nomination, as did lead actress Martha Scott, and the film was nominated for Best Picture.



George Gershwin (1898-1937) - *Piano Concerto in F major* (1925)

I Allegro – II Adagio - Andante con moto - III Allegro agitato

Gershwin's unique compositional career began with writing popular songs in New York's Tin Pan Alley. He achieved success with Broadway musicals and with his works for the concert hall, starting with *Rhapsody in Blue* which premiered in 1924. Gershwin went on to create the extraordinary 'American folk opera' *Porgy and Bess* in 1935, only to conclude his all-too-brief career in California writing music for films before tragically succumbing to a brain tumour at the age of 38. Gershwin's understanding of both American and European musical styles helped to achieve a sophisticated fusion of musical elements. This remarkable synthesis may be heard in the *Piano Concerto* which we're performing tonight.

Written in 1925 for solo piano and orchestra, the concerto is closer in form to a traditional concerto than his earlier jazz-influenced *Rhapsody in Blue* which had been considered rather experimental. The conductor and composer Walter Damrosch had been present at the premiere of *Rhapsody in Blue* in February 1924, in which the composer performed the piano solo. The day after the concert, Damrosch contacted Gershwin to commission a full-scale piano concerto for the New York Symphony Orchestra.

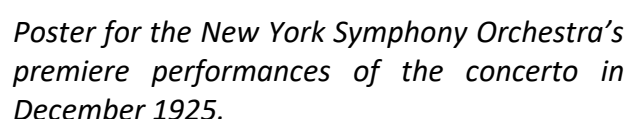
Due to contractual obligations for three different Broadway musicals, Gershwin was not able to start work until May 1925. He began the two-piano score in July, after returning from a trip to London, and the original drafts were entitled *New York Concerto*. The first movement was written in July, the second in August, and the third in September. Gershwin booked practice facilities at the Chautauqua Institution which offered seclusion for Gershwin to focus on the task in hand. Gershwin was able to complete the full orchestration of the concerto on 10th November 1925.



George Gershwin at work in the 1920s, around the time the Piano Concerto was written.

The concerto shows great development in Gershwin's compositional technique, particularly as he orchestrated the entire work himself (arranger Ferde Grofé had helped Gershwin orchestrate *Rhapsody in Blue*). Unlike *Rhapsody in Blue*, which was originally written for solo piano and 23 instruments, the concerto is scored for full symphony orchestra. The trio of two B flat clarinets and bass clarinet is especially prominent, featured as the backing to the solo trumpet in the second movement.

'The first movement employs the Charleston rhythm. It is quick and pulsating, representing the young enthusiastic spirit of American life. It begins with a rhythmic motif given out by the kettle drums... The principal theme is announced by the bassoon. Later, a second theme is introduced by the piano. The second movement has a poetic, nocturnal atmosphere which has come to be referred to as the American blues, but in a purer form than that in which they are usually treated. The final movement reverts to the style of the first. It is an orgy of rhythms, starting violently and keeping to the same pace throughout.'





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Florence Price (1887-1953) - *Symphony No. 1 in E minor* (1932)

I Allegro ma non troppo - II Largo, maestoso - III Juba Dance - IV Finale

Born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, Florence Price was a prolific composer whose output comprised over 300 works including four symphonies, four concertos, choral works, art songs, chamber music and compositions for solo instruments. She was one of three children in a mixed-race family, whose father was the only African American dentist in the city. Their mother was a music teacher who guided Florence's early musical training. When she enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Florence initially passed as Mexican to avoid racial discrimination against African Americans, listing her hometown as 'Pueblo, Mexico'.

Florence Price's music was largely neglected after her death, but as interest has grown in African American and female composers in recent years, her work has been rediscovered and is now being celebrated. In 2009 a substantial collection of papers, including dozens of her scores, was found in an abandoned and dilapidated house on the outskirts of St Anne, Illinois which Price had used as a summer house. As the American music critic Alex Ross wrote in *The New Yorker* in 2018, 'not only did Price fail to enter the canon; a large quantity of her music came perilously close to obliteration. That run-down house in St Anne is a potent symbol of how a country can forget its cultural history'. In November 2018, the music publisher G. Schirmer announced that it had acquired the exclusive worldwide rights to Florence Price's complete catalogue and in 2021, classical pianist Lara Downes initiated a project, *Rising Sun Music*, to draw attention to the influence of composers from diverse backgrounds such as Price.

Price's *Symphony No. 1 in E minor* was the first full-scale orchestral work written by Price and it is notable as the first symphony by a black woman to be performed by a major American orchestra. The symphony was composed between January 1931 and early 1932 as Price recovered from an injury. Finding humour in an accident, Price wrote to a friend, 'I found it possible to snatch a few precious days in the month of January in which to write undisturbed. But, oh dear me, when shall I ever be so fortunate again as to break a foot.'



Florence Price studied in the New England Conservatory of Music from 1902 with a double major in organ and piano teaching. By the time she graduated in 1906, she had started composing.

In February 1932, Price entered the symphony and three other works into the national Rodman Wanamaker composition competition. Whilst all of Price's entries received recognition, this symphony won the first place \$500 prize for an orchestral work. The award brought Price national recognition and caught the attention of the conductor Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Stock and his orchestra premiered the piece on 15th June 1933 at the Chicago World's Fair as part of a concert dedicated to 'The Negro in Music'. Both black newspapers, such as the *Chicago Defender*, and the white press, including the *Chicago Daily News*, sung the symphony's praises. This success inspired Price to send scores and letters to conductors of prestigious orchestras to try to get her work performed, but she had little luck outside of Chicago.

Price's compositional style is distinctive, taking inspiration from a variety of elements. Her training at the New England Conservatory with George Chadwick familiarised her with the compositional style of Antonín Dvořák, the renowned Czech composer who himself took influence from African American spirituals and Native American folk song, most famously in his *Symphony No. 9, 'From the New World'*. Chadwick was a member of the 'Boston Six' cohort of American nationalist composers who developed the quintessential American orchestral sound of the early 20th century. He encouraged Price to explore the use of spirituals and other African American musical idioms in her compositions and Price featured the Juba dance (a dance originally brought by enslaved peoples from the Kingdom of Kongo, in modern-day Angola, to South Carolina) in her first and third symphonies.

The initial critical response to the symphony was positive, though following this, the work fell into relative obscurity. In 2012, Bob McQuiston of America's National Public Radio called it, 'an early American symphony worthy of being rediscovered'. He further remarked:

'The opening movement has melodies and rhythms typically found in Afro-American folk music, and recalls Dvořák's New World Symphony, while the following slow movement features a moving hymn tune of Price's design. Both concluding movements are fast and return to the juba dance concept. They contain hints of fiddles and banjos, antic slide whistle effects, and a recurring three-against-two melody which end this loveable work on a whimsical note.'

*Florence Price
photographed at
work in the 1940s.*



St Cyprian's Church, Clarence Gate

St Cyprian's is an Anglican Parish of the Church of England in the Diocese of London. Designed by Sir Ninian Comper and built in 1903, it has been described as "a spacious, whitewashed church of beautiful proportions and restrained detail".

The church was originally founded by Charles Gutch in 1866. The fourth son of the Rector of Seagrave in Leicestershire, Gutch was educated at Cambridge and after his ordination served curacies in Leicestershire, Leeds and Bath before moving to London. By 1864 he had served curacies in St Matthias', Stoke Newington, St Paul's, Knightsbridge, and All Saints', Margaret Street. Anxious to acquire a church of his own, he proposed to build a mission church in a poor and neglected north-eastern corner of Marylebone, which would require a portion of the parishes of St Marylebone and St Paul, Rossmore Road to be handed over. However, neither the Rector of St Marylebone nor the Vicar of St Paul's approved of the churchmanship of Father Gutch. Furthermore, he proposed to dedicate the mission to St Cyprian of Carthage.

This caused difficulties, and a few weeks before the mission was due to open, the Bishop of London protested and suggested that the district be named after one of the Apostles instead. Father Gutch pointed out that a number of other churches in the Diocese had recently been dedicated to other saints, and the dedication to St Cyprian was allowed to remain.

Over the next thirty years, St Cyprian Mission Church flourished, and became overcrowded. Lord Portman refused to make available a site which would allow the building of a larger church as he too was opposed to Gutch's churchmanship. Charles Gutch died in 1896 with his vision of his larger church unrealised. His successor, Reverend George Forbes, immediately stressed that a new permanent church was urgently required, and in 1901, Lord Portman agreed to sell a site for well below market value, provided that sufficient funds were available to build the church by June 1904. It was completed with time to spare and dedicated to the memory of Charles Gutch.

The church was designed by Comper in a Gothic Revival style and built in red brick with stone dressings. The building has a nave, aisles and clerestory, but no tower, and features perpendicular window tracery and stained glass by Comper. St Cyprian's was designed to reflect Comper's emphasis on the Eucharist and the influence on him of the Oxford Movement. He said his church was to resemble "a lantern, and the altar is the flame within it".

The interior, also in the perpendicular style, features a white and gold colour scheme with ornate furnishings, including a finely carved and painted rood screen and a gilded classical font cover. The timber hammer beam roof features tie beam trusses with panelled tracery spandrels. The building is regarded as one of London's most beautiful churches.



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Friends of Camden Symphony Orchestra

Would you consider supporting the orchestra by joining our Friends Scheme?

We enjoy performing an extremely varied range of repertoire for you, but it costs around £5,000 to put on a concert, and ticket sales only cover around a third of the costs. In the present climate, funding for any arts endeavour is increasingly difficult and like any other organisation, we face rising costs every year.

Our aim is to continue to provide players and audiences with the opportunity to perform and hear adventurous repertoire, to keep membership of the orchestra open to accomplished players regardless of their means, and to provide a platform for emerging soloists. We would like to thank our Friends who are helping us to achieve this.

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If you have enjoyed our concert and feel able to contribute to the orchestra's future development, we ask you to consider becoming a Friend of Camden Symphony Orchestra.

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If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at info@camdenso.org.uk.

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Clara Rodriguez – Piano



The Venezuelan virtuoso pianist Clara Rodriguez has built an enviable international reputation for her innovative programme planning, juxtaposing standard repertoire with works by South American composers and has commissioned, premiered and is the dedicatee of over thirty works.

Aged 16 she was in her eighth year at the Conservatorio Juan José Landaeta of Caracas when she was awarded the Teresa Carreño Scholarship, which enabled her to come to London to study at the Royal College of Music with Phyllis Sellick where she was the recipient of many prizes and awards including the Scarlatti Prize, the Mozart Prize, and the Percy Buck Award, as a finalist in the Chappell Prize. With the Royal College of Music orchestras, she performed concertos by Mozart, De Falla and Ravel. In Caracas, at seventeen, Clara made her debut

playing Mozart's *Piano Concerto K595* with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra under the baton of José Antonio Abreu.

Clara's career as a solo pianist has taken her to perform to great acclaim in most European countries, Venezuela, the United States, India, Egypt, Syria and Tunisia. In London, Clara is a popular performer who regularly plays in recitals and as soloist with orchestras in the most prestigious halls including the Southbank Centre, Wigmore Hall and the Barbican. She is regularly invited to play concertos with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra as well as with other El Sistema Orchestras, one of those memorable dates was her participation in the Grandes Virtuosos del Piano Festival where she played the Reynaldo Hahn *Piano Concerto* alongside other participants that included Paul Badura-Skoda and Chick Corea. Clara regularly plays recitals at Arundells, the home of the late Sir Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister.

Clara Rodriguez is often interviewed by the BBC and her CDs regularly feature on BBC Radio 3 and on radio networks worldwide. She has recorded six solo albums for Nimbus Records and her latest release of works by Chopin is found on the Ulysses Arts label. She is a much-appreciated pedagogue; her students have been awarded numerous scholarships to the most prestigious universities and music colleges and she teaches at the Junior Department of the Royal College of Music. In 2015 Clara Rodriguez was awarded the 'Classical Music Act' LUKAS Prize. She has been made an honorary member of the Chelsea Arts Club and named 'Woman of the Year' by the main newspapers and magazines of Venezuela. She is an editor with published scores on Spartan Press, Nimbus Editions, and the ABRSM.

To find out more about Clara, including details of her recordings and future performances, visit www.clararodriguez.com.

Levon Parikian - Conductor

Levon Parikian has been one of our regular conductors since 2000, and our Musical Director since 2004.

After studying conducting with Michael Rose, David Parry and George Hurst, Lev went to St Petersburg to study with the great Russian teacher Ilya Musin. Since completing his studies, he has pursued a freelance career and is much in demand as Guest Conductor with orchestras in Britain. He currently holds Principal Conductor posts with several London-based orchestras, is Principal Conductor of the City of Oxford Orchestra, and Artistic Director of The Rehearsal Orchestra. He has worked extensively with students and youth orchestras, including the Hertfordshire County Youth Orchestra, National Youth Strings Academy, Royal College of Music Junior Sinfonia, and at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he also taught conducting for fifteen years. In 2012, Lev conducted the UK première of Armen Tigranian's opera *Anoush* with London Armenian Opera. In 2014 he conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra in a re-recording of the theme tune for *Hancock's Half Hour* for lost episodes recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 4. Lev conducted the BBC Concert Orchestra again, along with violinist Jack Liebeck, for *Raptures*, the debut orchestral album of composer Stuart Hancock which was released in November 2019.

Lev has a parallel career as a writer, and his latest book, *Taking Flight: The Evolutionary Story of Life on the Wing*, was published in May 2023. Lev's previous books include: *Waving, Not Drowning*, an entertaining insight into the conductor's world; *Why Do Birds Suddenly Disappear?*, a sorry tale of atrocious birdwatching; *Into the Tangled Bank*, an exploration of our relationship with nature longlisted for the Wainwright Prize; *Music to Eat Cake By*, a collection of essays commissioned by readers exploring everything from the art of the sandwich and space travel to how not to cure hiccups and, of course, his beloved birdsong; and *Light Rain Sometimes Falls: A British Year Through Japan's 72 Seasons* which was published in September 2021. For further information, visit levparikian.com.

John Crawford - Leader

John Crawford has been our leader since September 2006.

John received his early musical training in Sheffield, but later was able to study with Molly Mack at the Royal Academy of Music through the help of the National Youth Orchestra. He won a Foundation Scholarship to the Royal College of Music where he studied with Leonard Hirsch. After further study in Vienna and Siena, John joined the BBC Symphony Orchestra where he played for a decade. A growing interest in teaching led to his appointment as principal violin teacher at the Keski-Pohjanmaan Conservatory in Finland. John now combines a busy performing life with teaching at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Purcell School and the Royal College of Music Junior Department.

John is also a qualified teacher of the Alexander Technique and has had a lifelong interest in freedom of movement for musicians. He works regularly as an adjudicator and leads the Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra as well as CSO.

Camden Symphony Orchestra

Violin I

John Crawford (Leader)
Ashleigh Watkins
Jonathan Knott
Hannah Min
Diana Muggleston
Susie Bokor
Nick Sexton
Jasmine Cullingford
Jonathan Silver
Lyndsey Silver
Robbie Nichols
Sarah Too

Violin II

Sheila Hayman
Josh Hillman
Marion Fleming
Jo Wilson
Josie Pearson
Kathy He
Nanako Kimura
Simon Nathan
Max Jones-Lachman

Viola

James Taylor
Ingolf Becker
Roz Norkett
Lottie Copley
Mark Denza
Edward Kershaw
Stephen Smithers

Cello

Susan Delgado
Jane Brett-Jones
Denis Ribeiro
Benjamin Phipps
Antje Saunders
Rebecca Cowper
Sophie Linton
Richard Campkin
Andrew Erskine

Double Bass

James Mott
Risenga Makondo
Seth Edmunds

Flute

Amanda Lockhart Knight
Jarad Slater

Piccolo

Robbie Fulford

Oboe

Rachel Sutton
Lisa Stonham

Cor Anglais

Adam Bakker

Clarinet

Sheena Balmain
Noriko Lody

Bass Clarinet

Jess Sullivan

Bassoon

David Robson
Sebastian Till

Horn

Ed Dorman
Gwen McDougal
Tim Egan
Malcolm Millar

Trumpet

Sarah Hall
Stone Tung
John Kerr

Trombone

Kirk Robinson
Richard Miller
Peter Biddlecombe

Tuba

Charlie Jones

Timpani

Owain Williams

Percussion

Ryan Hepburn
Charlie Hodge
Francisco Negreiros
Elizabeth Brightwell-Gibbons

Forthcoming Concerts

Saturday 25th November 2023 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Alexander Borodin - *In the Steppes of Central Asia*

Johannes Brahms - *Violin Concerto*

Antonín Dvořák - *Symphony No. 8*

Join us in November as we start our 2023-2024 season. Borodin's *In the Steppes of Central Asia* was written to celebrate the silver anniversary of the reign of Emperor Alexander II of Russia. Brahms' only *Violin Concerto*, which he dedicated to the violinist, and his friend, Joseph Joachim, is considered one of the great violin concertos. Dvořák's *Symphony No. 8* was composed in 1889 as the composer was elected to the Bohemian Academy of Science, Literature and Arts. Noted for its cheerful and optimistic disposition, the symphony takes inspiration from the Bohemian folk music that Dvořák loved.

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Saturday 16th March 2024 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Programme to be announced.

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Saturday 6th July 2024 at 7.30pm

St Cyprian's Church, Glentworth Street, London, NW1 6AX

Programme to include Szymanowski *Violin Concerto No. 2*.

Further details about this concert, including ticket information, will be available at:

www.camdenso.org.uk